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1. Introduction: The State and Ethnic Relations

This paper will consider the state, in Weberian terms, to be a government-centered network of public power relations that makes decisions and administers for the benefit, the welfare, and the survival of all its members. Ethnicities are, of course, subgroups of members who use the ethnicity to seek their own collective interests. In the ideal world, the state would seek to negotiate the conflicting interests of the various ethnicities for the benefit of all.

At the outset, there is a basic conflict between the state and all ethnicities housed therein except that which rules the state. The best interests of the whole (the perspective of the state) can rarely be congruent with the best interests of a single ethnicity. Most states are "ethnocratic," that is, they are controlled by a particular ethnicity.[1] In ethnocracies, the interests of all other ethnicities tend to be subordinated, thus creating conflicts that cannot always be readily distinguished from the structural conflicts inherent in the operation of the state.

The ladinos, who have long dominated the Mesoamerican states, are divided between those who, on the one hand, favor a rigorous Liberal policy to achieve labor control through forced deculturation and social control based directly on threat of force (as exemplified by the Barrios regime of the 1870s), and those who, on the other hand, favor an *indigenista* policy,[2] also Liberal-inspired, but designed to obtain the conformance of Indians to labor controls through "civilizing" and "educating" them. What is common to both policies is the wish to get Indians to conform to the interests of the dominant ladinos. All Central American states except Belize are clearly ethnocratically controlled by mestizo sectors. They differ in the extent to which the interests of subordinate ethnicities are ignored or marginalized.

If the ideally neutral state cannot exist, something like it may be found where the central government's interests differ from those of a regionally dominant ethnicity.

Two cases will illustrate: Mayan-ladino relations in Chiapas, Mexico, and Kuna-mestizo relations in Panama.

The regional ethnic situation in Chiapas, Mexico, is a historical continuation of the ladino-Indian relational system of the western highlands of Guatemala. The Mexican Revolution, however, changed the priorities of the Mexican national state. The sometimes violent ethnic conflicts historically characteristic of Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador were seen to be counter to the development of the national state. The national government's priorities, therefore, sought to lessen regional ethnic conflicts throughout Mexico, including those generated by ethnic problems in Chiapas, by advocating an almost aggressive *indigenista* policy. The Mexican state, thereby, appeared in a somewhat neutral role, trying to balance the interests of the two major ethnicities of the region.

The Kuna of Panama have for over fifty years enjoyed a negotiated autonomous relationship with the government of Panama.[3] This has given them considerable control over the Comarca granted them by the government as well as access to the government in Panama City. They have been able to defend much of their land from the incursions of the expanding campesino population. This autonomy has been accompanied by a level of ethnic solidarity that is not enjoyed by any other indigenous ethnicity in Panama. Bourgeois has provided a useful comparison of the ethnic relations of the Guaymí on the one hand, and the Kuna, on the other, with the administration of the banana plantations in Bocos del Toro.[4] The Kuna work on the plantation as temporary migrants but have consistently been under the control of Kuna leaders. They have enjoyed occupational benefits in terms of jobs held and living conditions that the Guaymí have uniformly failed to achieve. The reasons are complex, but clearly the advantages enjoyed by the Kuna derive in part from their initial and continuing negotiated relationship with the central government.

The ethnic state relations just cited are cases in which the ethnicity lies within the territorial bounds of the state. Since ethnicities are separate and somewhat autonomous entities, they can, and not infrequently do, have relations with other states. The United States has entered the scene in this capacity in a number of instances that will be discussed later in terms of "third-party derivative power."

2. Ecological Factors in Ethnic Survival

Central America presents widely divergent ecologies within which ethnicities and the state contend for their respective survival. These are conditions that need to be examined first because the strategies for survival must operate within the contraints they impose.

Demographic variables. Population size is, in the long run, perhaps the most important single factor that determines the Darwinian process. Large populations can afford large losses and still survive. Small populations obviously cannot.

The very size of the indigenous population of Guatemala—three to five million, depending on who is counting—is a long-run advantage unmatched anywhere else in the hemisphere. There is a great discrepancy in the estimates of the size of this twentieth-century population. Proindigenous advocates have claimed that as much as 85 percent of the population is "Indian," and they would surely be right if everyone with an indigenous ancestor were included. If, however, we are referring to people who identify themselves as members of an indigenous ethnicity, then the figure could not hold.

The censuses give some figures that suggest a decelerating decline in the total population. While the basis of census judgments is notorious, nevertheless I suspect that their figures are closer to some kind of social truth than claims based on ancestry. What is of much greater importance, however, is that four of the five departments with the highest percentage of Indian population manifested an increase in the proportion of Indians over the last intercensus period. This means that in the western highlands there is a core area where the Indian population is becoming

Department	1950 Total Pop.	1950 Percent Indian	1964 Total Pop.	1964 Percent Indian	1981 Total Pop.	1981 Percent Indian
Totonicapan	99,434	96.6	142,873	94.2	204,419	97.1
Sololá	82,869	93.8	107,429	93.1	154,249	94.2
Alta Verapaz	188,758	93.4	263,160	92.0	322,008	89.4
El Quiché	174,882	83.7	255,280	84.9	328,175	85.2
Chimaltenango	122,310	77.5	161,760	76.1	230,059	79.8

stronger. It seems likely that the northern part of Quetzaltenango and San Marcos, and southern Huehuetenango, are part of this area, were it possible to separate out the figures. It is here that Carol Smith locates her commercial core of Indian development, and in two of these departments (El Quiché and Chimaltenango) the greatest loss of Indian life was sustained in the 1979–84 period.

Census Year	Total Population	Indian Population	Percent Indian
1950	2,788,122	1,491,725	53.5
1964	4,245,176	1,842,802	43.3
1981	6,054,227	2,536,523	41.9

While in the overall picture there may be a slow decline in the Indian proportion of the national population, it is quite overbalanced by two facts: the rate of decline is decreasing and may level off, and the rate of absolute growth is accelerating markedly. This picture suggests that the future of Guatemala may well see a consolidation of the ethnic identity based on a more stable population.[5]

Guatemalan Intercensus Interval	1950–1964 14 yrs	1964–1981 17 yrs
Change in Indian Percent of total	53.5% to 43.3% (10.2 pts)	43.3% to 41.9% (1.4 pts)
Percent increase in absolute numbers	27	73

While no one has any real idea how many indigenous peoples remain in El Salvador, Baron Castro estimated a total of 375,000 in 1940,[6] Adams possibly as high as 400,000 in the early 1950s,[7] and Maxwell possibly 367,500 Nahuat-Pipil speakers in the early 1980s.[8] A report prepared by the Ministerio de Cultura y Comunicaciones in 1985, asserted that 9 percent of the national population, or approximately 450,000 people, were Indian.[9] Adrián Esquino, a Nahuat from El Salvador interviewed in 1987, claimed that 36 percent of the population was Indian.[10] The issue is, as always, complicated by the question of how they ultimately identify and define themselves. That so many Indians can remain in a clandestine state, where much of the Salvadoran population seems unaware of their presence, is possible in part because they are a marked minority in the population at large—probably not more

than 20 percent, and likely less. In comparison, the Guatemalan Indians constitute easily one-half of the national population.

The importance of the Guatemalan Indian expansion, however, can be seen when we compare figures with neighboring Honduras, where between 1778 and 1980, the Indian population increased from only 88,000 to 178,500, dropping from 67.4 percent to 4.6 percent of the total population. Quite clearly, the Guatemalan Indians' economic and agrarian plight poses an infinitely greater threat to the state than is the case in Honduras.

The very small numbers involved in Costa Rica clearly make the Indians of that country totally subordinate to the decisions of the state; serious overt opposition can be little more than symbolic. In contrast, any suggestion of serious political activity by Indians in Guatemala or El Salvador instantly causes anxiety in the ladino ethnocratic state. The Miskito on the Nicaraguan Atlantic coast posed a threat to the emerging Sandinista state only in part because of their absolute numbers—upward of 80,000. They are a major part of the Atlantic regional population. The neighboring Sumu—perhaps 4,000—take on political importance only in company with the Miskito. And the Rama are more important to the Sandinistas for their symbolic worth than because of any serious threat they pose to the state. Indeed, the Atlantic coastal indigenous population constitutes only a small part of the total population. In relative terms, however, it is very important, since it composes a quarter of the total population in a region of effectively no roads and poor communication.

Environmental variables. The Spanish colonial aversion for the tropics was important in Central American history. Although the Mexican tropical Caribbean coast was dominated early, the first settlements in Central America were in the highlands and on the Pacific coast. After this they slowed down and occupied the Atlantic lowlands gradually or not at all. Efforts to extend military and evangelical hegemony over the (now) Nicaraguan and Honduran Atlantic coasts were achieved by dreary results. Conquerors entered and departed, leaving disease and genes, but no colonies; missions were established, experienced short lives, and then were driven out or abandoned. The Spanish conquerors seemed to prefer a somewhat arid climate, the Guatemalan Oriente and neighboring Sonsonate, the "colonial core" area delineated by Lutz and Lovell.[11] The highlands were difficult and cold, the Atlantic coast damp and hot.

In the annals of western colonial expansion, the notion that a region is "empty" usually has meant that westerners simply have not found it attractive enough to enter, exploit, or colonize. It has also meant that the colonizers did not think the resident aboriginal inhabitants were worthy of mention.

While obviously varying with the topography and the technology of transport, geographical distance is a major factor in the degree to which an ethnicity is accessible to state control. It is difficult to be much concerned about a group that is distant in a region that is of no particular economic or political value to the state.

Through the nineteenth century, the Atlantic coast and its human inhabitants were of little interest to the Hispanophone populations of the Central American highlands and west coast. So slight was the interest that the standing dispute between Guatemala and the United Kingdom over Belize was left unresolved, and the national boundary between Nicaragua and Honduras was not finally settled until early 1960. Indeed, travel in Central America was generally difficult until after World War II; in the mid-nineteenth century it still required more than a week to travel from Puerto Barrios to Guatemala City, and to travel through Central America usually warranted a book.[12]

Indeed, until World War II, one of the few times the Nicaraguan state had shown interest in the Atlantic coast was when Sandino tried to obtain the cooperation of the Miskito in his cause in the 1930s.[13] After British interest subsided in the nineteenth century, Honduras tended to ignore all but the banana-growing regions. When, in the mid-1950s, the boundary dispute with Nicaragua heated up again, the only regional response was for both governments to rush public health programs into the region, apparently to show that they had really cared all along.[14]

While the Atlantic coast has been the major area of Central America to have benefited from this "distance" in recent years, it should be recalled that the aboriginal peoples of northwestern and northern Guatemala also benefited from delayed Spanish conquest. It is only in recent decades that serious entries have been made into the Darien.

For isolated groups ethnic identity is a relatively marginal concern. It becomes important when contact with other societies—ethnicities—poses some kind of threat to one's identity or survival. Therefore, the expansion of, first, indigenous, then colonial, and, most recently, nation-states has constantly reduced the time and space between societies. Maintaining self-identity has emerged as a central problem as

marginal peoples have been swept up by expanding state interests and demo-economic pressures. In a sense, the Miskito perceived no threat to their ethnic identity until successful revolutionary leaders tried to win them to the cause.

3. State Strategies in Dealing with Ethnicities

Superior military force and strategy. Every state has resources that provide overwhelming advantages over the individuals and groupings that make up its domain. First among these is the control of force. While Weber argued that the state had the sole legitimate use of force, history has demonstrated that the definition of what is accepted as legitimate often varies with who controls the force. Weberian legitimacy, therefore, is one result of the fact of the state's superior force.

Since the end of World War II, the major use of armed force—military, police, state, and private terrorist groups—in Central America has been to obtain conforming behavior in the national population. There have been no Central American wars in spite of external attempts to create them. Rather, the armies of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and, briefly, Honduras have been used to fight insurgency and, in some instances, to terrorize the civilian population.

Both Guatemala and El Salvador have a constant fear of political opposition among Indians and have thus periodically resorted to the use of force to scare them into quiescence. The extent and intensity of the use of force has varied. In El Salvador, certainly with the 1932 slaughter but perhaps before,[15] *ethnocide* has been the effective and overt (although perhaps not stated) policy. Labor was needed, but Salvadoran coffee labor has for years been effectively worked by mobilizing individuals apart from family units.

While the killing of Indians in Guatemala and El Salvador has always been accepted by the state as an appropriate way to deal with their opposition, it is my impression that the wholesale slaughter of the 1979–84 era marked a turn toward genocide. It is difficult to interpret such a holocaust as merely an attempt to kill political subversives. It has been argued that a desire to eliminate Indians from agricultural lands was involved, as the slaughter also succeeded in driving people into refuge in Mexico, separating many of them from their land. An urban ladino engaged in agricultural production reflected this view by saying, "We will not have peace or progress in this country until we reduce them from four million to two."[16]

The effect on the Indians of Guatemala has been a superficial retreat into political conformance. The events of the past decades are, however, immediate and fresh in the memories of certainly hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Indians, and they are aware of the role of the state in perpetrating the violence.

Setting a national agenda. While the recourse to force is the ultimate and always potential basis of state control, it is not the one to which most people usually respond, since the constant use of force is, ultimately, self-destructive. The intelligent state (always supposing there is one) seeks to control the wider environment so that people find it convenient to make decisions that conform to desired policies. This is achieved through all sorts of laws, regulations, and practices that may be summed up as the setting of the national agenda.[17]

Since liberal interests first prevailed in Central America with independence, the national agendas have consistently been oriented toward greater or lesser national development. In no country of the Isthmus have the specific interests of indigenous ethnicities been explicitly defended in the enunciation of these national agendas. Indians, if included, have always been categorized as part of the national labor force, and state language concerning them is usually in terms that hide the ethnic issue behind some nonethnic usage such as "mano de obra," "campesinos," or "jornaleros." This was as true of the Guatemalan revolutionary governments of 1944–54 as of their predecessors and successors.[18]

In the post–World War II era it was the magic of "development" that provided the context for promoting the state's interests instead of those of the Indian populations. This continues today, although in many respects the intervening years have modulated efforts to give apparent recognition to indigenous interests. Planning and policies are always in accord with the perceived interests of the larger state.

The role of emerging Mayan bourgeois, educated, and professionally trained individuals of Indian extraction is unquestionably important in the emergence of the national-level consciousness of the Indian population. It has, however, yet to make much of a mark on the setting of the national agenda. Indian politicians are having some influence within the national Congress, but there are few of them, and their efforts are constricted to limited areas. To date, unfortunately, the most obvious effect of Indian political action has been to contribute to the insurgency that brought about

the 1979–84 holocaust. Indians are, therefore, very apprehensive about being too politically visible.

Control of the economy. An important source of state power is the ability to manipulate the flow and distribution of goods, money, and services needed by the population and by the agencies of the state itself. While in the world at large this varies greatly between socialist and capitalist nation-states, in Central America only Nicaragua has made any attempt to institute an overtly socialist regime. Even there, however, the capitalist agenda still operates.

Subordinate ethnicities generally suffer from the free operation of capitalist economies. Since non-Indians are usually most strategically located in the national field, they usually gain at the expense of the others. Nondominant ethnicities are rarely in a favorable strategic position and seldom are powerful enough to be favored by the operation of the market. There are some major counteractions under way, however, and they will be taken up below, in the discussion of economic expansion.

State integration. In their dealings with nondominant ethnicities, states usually favor one of three rather different strategies of control: encapsulation, assimilation, or extermination.

In spite of recent events in Guatemala, genocide is rarely an overt policy, and is seldom even the favored policy. It may be resorted to when nondominant ethnicities not only seem to hold no promise of being harnessed into the state agenda, but pose a real obstacle to those goals. Such was the case, for example, in the extermination of Indians in the western expansion of the United States, and in the Argentine "conquista del desierto." It is arguable whether at some point such a goal was involved in the Guatemalan military policy in the northwest highlands in the 1979–1984 period.

Overt policies and efforts to deculturate and assimilate are milder, and more common, responses to the same perspective that can lead to extermination. Reference has already been made to the case of El Salvador, and similar efforts have taken place from time to time in Guatemala. Often, however, integration takes place less in response to specific governmental intent than as a result of ongoing state-supported capitalist activity. Thus, indigenous communities that were characterized as "ladinoized" in the early 1950s (barrios in Guazacapán and Chilquimulilla, Acasaguastlán in Guatemala, Panchimalco and Izalco in El Salvador, Subtiaba and

Monimbó in Nicaragua, and Matambú in Costa Rica) have been losing their Indian basis of identity through being forced to compete under unfavorable conditions with expanding ladino/mestizo sectors of the national society.[19] Ethnic reawakening has occurred where a political opening presented itself (i.e., in Subtiaba and Monimbó).

The *indigenista* policies that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century were, among other things, a way of achieving liberal goals without such violent side effects. These policies became the hallmark of progressive thinking on the part of liberal and revolutionary government well into the second half of the present century. They have so dominated the thinking of citizens and politicians alike in Guatemala that even after the terrifying massacre in Patzicia in 1944, the newspapers avoided the economic and political problems confronted by the indigenous population in favor of editorials calling for greater *indigenista* measures—more education, health, literacy, and, in general, civilization of the Indian.[20]

The only mode of integration that really permits some kind of cultural autonomy also involves the geographical encapsulation of the ethnicity, or some significant portion of it, by the state. The Comarca system of the Kuna, or the reservations set up in Costa Rica and, apparently less effectively, in Honduras, are of this kind and, whether meeting the approval of outsiders or not, are usually welcomed by the indigenous population as the best of the poor alternatives that exist. The most favored alternative from the Indian perspective—complete autonomy—is not likely to be allowed under the general conduct of nation-states.

Rather, the setting aside of a territory in which the indigenous group has certain rights that are not enjoyed by others and is provided with some degree of autonomy is probably the most that such ethnicities can hope to gain within the contemporary nation-state system. Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama have all set land aside for Indian groups. Their success varies, of course. Honduran Indians have suffered encroachments on their lands even with legal protection.[21] In Costa Rica the status of indigenous reserves varies. In general they are probably better off than elsewhere, but they also suffer from encroachments and crowding caused by the growing indigenous population.[22] In Panama, we have already alluded to the Kuna. Much more vulnerable are the Guaymí, who have not succeeded in finding a legal relationship of autonomy with the state, and the Chocó, who are themselves often intruders into new lands.[23]

4. Indigenous Ethnic Strategies for Survival

Given the overwhelming advantages that states enjoy over unfavored ethnicities, it is surprising not only that the latter have continued to exercise a decisive role historically, but that they have been emerging into ever greater prominence in recent decades. They do exist, however, and they repeatedly come into being because they are one of the very few kinds of large human organizations that can exert a strong psychological claim on individuals. In order to do this, they must maintain strong solidarity. That in turn requires that they retain active control over the cultural and symbolic elements that constitute the external signals or markers of their self-identification.

The process of ethnic identity is so complex that the tools of a single discipline cannot begin to penetrate it. Social anthropology[24] is particularly interested in the external markers and symbolic vehicles that provide the focus of an individual's and, therefore, of the collectivity's, identification. A great variety of things serve this purpose. History, however, is a naturally selective process that has ascertained that certain of these are particuarly effective in keeping ethnicities together. A common language, control over territory, some degree of endogamy, and selected rituals seem to have been especially effective.

Control of language. Perhaps the most commonly cited ethnic marker is language, and there is no question that the loss of language signals not only the loss of basic tools of self-expression, but also much of the cognitive framework that depends on the persistence of those forms. For almost all Central American ethnicities, language is a major concern. For many Guatemalan Indians, diverse in their Mayan languages and dialects, the indigenous language, *lengua*, remains *the* language. While there is a great deal of bilingualism, especially among males, linguistic chauvinism is also developing among some of the more urbanized components. The Academia Maya Quiché has come into being specifically to defend the purity of Quiché. Similar groups for other languages are also active.

In the Nicaraguan government's efforts to strengthen the central symbolic core of the Atlantic coastal Indians, considerable work has been directed to writing in Miskito, Sumu, and Rama. The case of the Rama—perhaps 650 people—a fragile surviving ethnicity located on the southern Atlantic coast, is particularly instructive.

They have split into at least two components, one composed of town dwellers, the other those who live in the bush. Recent work by Colette Craig suggests that these two groups split in terms of adaptation to the more complex coastal scene. The townspeople almost totally lost the Rama language and, indeed, assumed in general that it was all but lost except possibly among those in the bush. Craig not only succeeded in recording and analyzing the Rama language but, with the firm support of the Nicaraguan authorities, is currently involved in attempting to reacquaint the town dwellers with their linguistic inheritance. This is certainly one of the few (if not the only) cases of a state taking such pains to reconfirm the ethnicity of a language that is on the verge of extinction.[25]

Control of territory. If language is perhaps the most central symbolic feature among possible foci of ethnic identity, control of basic resources certainly is the feature of greatest importance from the point of view of material selection. A great deal has been written about the special meaning that many indigenous groups attach to the land, and there is no question but that it has a special place within the symbolic repertory. Stephen Gudeman has described in a most imaginative way how the country people of Panama have undergone extreme changes in their model of the world as their relative control over their land has changed.[26]

The sustaining issue in controlling territory is that it is also an economic resource. In addition, however, the common dependence of a group of people on a territorial resource is a strong basis for solidarity. Generational ties are tightened when the inheritance of land is at stake.

Control over territory has successfully replaced language in some cases of solidarity. In the Montañas de Jalapa in eastern Guatemala there is a population that firmly asserts that it is indigenous, but it has not retained an Indian language. The people of the indigenous barrio of Subtiaba in León, Nicaragua, firmly assert their claim over shrimp-producing waters along the coast as their common property. Monimbo, the barrio of Masaya that was so active in the revolution, retains its indigenous identification principally on the basis of common territory.

Territory may play a number of roles for an ethnicity, but that crucially concerned with identity need not play an economic role. The identification with a lost or future homeland, for example, may have had, and might in the future have, some economic significance, but for the moment is purely a central feature of identity.

Control over community. While ethnic groups often find common residential areas, it is also the case that the emergence of an ethnicity and its continued saliency is very commonly marked by using residence as mechanism to retain exclusive control over people and property. Residence also, therefore, becomes an important component of the identity system. The range of importance and intensity of identification with a community varies broadly, but in Middle America perhaps the most famous theoretical argument is Eric Wolf's concerning corporate (or "closed corporate") community.[27] Wolf argued, in brief, that Mesoamerican Indians had used the community organization as a way of protecting ethnic identity by tying control over communal land, and religious and political activity into a single social organization and ritual program. "Community," of course, implies much more than merely an organized aggregate of coresidents. It involves daily interactions and familiar patterned behavior, internal factions and alliances, love and hatred, but with all, it also involved a recognition of common good and, if necessary, common defense against outsiders. In a generic sense, it is the minimal self-reproducing organization of the human species.[28]

Control of selected rituals. Social organization is constructed by standardizing certain behaviors, ordering conduct and expectations so that one may predict the actions of another. Some of these orderly behaviors act as critical symbols of the ethnicity itself. Since most human behavior is fairly sloppy, it is important that some things be done with particular care and be kept inviolate and protected from entropy. Thus, some performances are explicitly ritualistic and are retained specifically as devices to keep the system in order.

Besides (and in rare cases possibly in place of) the critical issues of language, territory, and reproduction, ethnicities will ritualize certain social organizational forms that then symbolize their distinctiveness. The use of such forms necessarily implies social relations; their use affects not only the members of the collectivity, but equally marks those who are thereby excluded.

All ethnic differences can potentially serve this function. When few differentiating features are in evidence, our attention is particularly drawn to the ritual function. In El Salvador, the Indians' concern to camouflage their antecedents led them to forgo some obvious and apparent features such as extensive use of costume. It

was, however, much more difficult to shift languages, and that feature apparently remains important today. In the 1950s some ladinoized communities of Guatemala, such as Guazacapán and Chiquimulilla, had effectively lost a distinctive indigenous language and significant territory. What remained were certain Catholic cults, religious groups in which no ladinos participated. These served as self-identity markers for the Indians and, at the same time, as external criteria for ladinos.

In ethnic communities that may otherwise be clearly distinct, such as in many of the highland communities of Guatemala, there will also be certain traits that are selected for special emphasis. The classic case is the *cajas de la comunidad* , literally, small chests carefully hidden in the church or elsewhere in which it is believed that the land titles, often royal grants, are retained.[29]

Biological reproduction and expansion. In keeping with the Darwinian model, probably the most successful of the strategies available to the nondominant ethnicities is that of biological reproduction and expansion. Since most such groups in Central America are rural cultivators and laborers, the most effective move in countering the state is the expansion of the agrarian population and, where appropriate, its migratory expansion into frontier areas. It is certainly the case that, while the expansion of the Guatemalan Indian population has placed it in a somewhat precarious position in facing an apprehensive state, its very numbers indicate that in the long run it will occupy a much more important political and economic role than it does now. There is no evidence of any overall indigenous population policy apart from that set by the needs of peasant cultivators. The state, however, for its part has played host in trying to establish population planning programs and has allowed the establishment of clinics and community-level workers to introduce family planning into communities, both Indian and ladino.

It will be recalled that the Miskito policy of reproduction involves a readiness to incorporate people of whatever genetic extraction; as long as the Miskito women kept control of the household within the Miskito community, the need for common ancestry and the inculcation of language and culture were met. The neighboring Sumu, however, have long lived under the coastal hegemony of the Miskito, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they, presumably along with other neighbors of the Miskito, suffered severely from slaving attacks and loss of population.

The "reproductive policy" of the Sumu, however, contrasts sharply with that of the Miskito. Whereas the latter have easily incorporated alien peoples in contact, no matter what the genetic composition, the Sumu have been more rigorous in retaining biological purity. This has had the Darwinian disadvantage of keeping their numbers low, but it also now allows them an easier basis of ethnic distinction from the Miskito, who have so extensively Africanized. The separate identity has allowed them to act independently of the Miskito in the recent autonomy process in Nicaragua.

The question of reproductive policy, as practiced, certainly can be a matter of some importance in the retention of identity. Unlike the problem of lack of territory, fictionalizing reproduction has few selective disadvantages. Marrying or mating with an outsider provides children for the inside, no matter what the outsider may be. Since the problem is common ancestry, it is not a difficult one. The number of ancestors doubles in every ascending generation, and somewhere the appropriate individual is likely to be found—or invented.

Economic expansion. Biological expansion, however, is not the only kind of expansion. Equally significant is the emergence over the past century of a commercially adept sector of Indians in the western central highlands of Guatemala. Indians of the region that Carol Smith has called the "core" of the indigenous western highlands,[30] that area extending from Totonicapan on the east through Quetzaltenango on the west, have for years been heavily engaged in commerce. In Quetzaltenango, this has led to the emergence of an indigenous sector with a lifestyle clearly marked by the accoutrements of western wealth. Along with this, Indians have increasingly taken up professions, especially as educators. To characterize this population as an Indian "bourgeoisie" may be true but also misleading, because, irrespective of their consumption patterns, some have found a strong nativistic ideology around which a clearly pan-national Indian identity is currently forming. It was marked by a very high degree of concentration on commerce. Indians in Quetzaltenango have become famous for their central position in the municipal and regional economy, and some have become extremely wealthy, being known as millionaires and sporting all the symbols of bourgeois wealth. Equally important, however, has been the economic success that has enabled some Indians to pursue professional training through university degrees.

At the eastern end of this region, close to Guatemala City, the Indians of the Patzicia area have strongly capitalized on the production of vegetable crops for export.

In a region that saw a major massacre of Indians by ladinos in 1944, the ladinos are now finding themselves economically uncompetitive with hard-working Indian cultivators who produce more for less. There is no evidence that this economic success has thus far provided much leverage to political power, but it seems likely that this could be a next stage.

The development of indigenous ethnicities is, in many respects, the core problem. Since they are deprived of advantages, special efforts are required to improve their status. If they become weaker, they are more disadvantaged and dependent; to become stronger, they must confront ladinos and ladinoization; they must decide whether to be coopted into the ladino population or to maintain an Indian identity for the possible benefit of their less successful ethnic relatives.

Third party derivative power. Development in marginalized populations is rarely impressive and, even when it occurs, it is slow. Apart from a rapid and successful revolution, there is only one quick way for a nondominant ethnicity to obtain an advantageous position of power with respect to the state: it must obtain support from a third power, an alternative source that can provide sufficient backing that the state must, in a sense, at least pause and pay attention. In Central America this has been used by both the ethnocratic states themselves and, in one recent instance, by an indigenous population.

Guatemala and El Salvador have both used the argument that the presence of socialist and Eastern European resources, the Communist threat posed by insurgent Indians and guerrilla forces, is sufficient reason to call in all the military and economic aid possible from the United States and Israel. The issue has never been addressed as to whether Indians do, in fact, constitute a Communist threat. It is enough that they are labeled as such.

In Nicaragua, where the positions are reversed, a significant sector of the Miskito population (and some Sumu) decided to draw upon the military and CIA support of the United States in their confrontation with the Sandinistas. The Miskito who left the country to oppose the government initially accepted the support of the United States, but then divided in terms of whether they wanted to be really so dependent on what was proving to be a highly self-interested partner.

Clearly, in the 1925 Tule rebellion of the San Blas Kuna, the United States also played a central role, but of a very different kind. In that instance, both Panama

and the Kuna accepted the United States as a broker—a role that it played to the advantage of the Kuna.

Nondominant ethnicities in Central America today face unattractive choices among third-party support, since most will inevitably be labeled as coming from the "CIA" or "the Communists." In either case, the label can do more damage than the good that might genuinely be forthcoming from the governments involved. Using such resources frames the ethnicities' political problems into the East-West conflict and thereby obscures the real problems that are confronting the individual members. Moreover, once locked into the competitive dynamics of the major powers, indigenous groups find themselves torn by the demands of the world system with all the lethal potential it implies.

Revolutions and rebellions. When an ethnicity revolts, it takes on one of the principal strategies usually reserved for the state—that is, the use of force. This is immensely risky, since it requires a whole range of resources that are rarely available to ethnicities; it also requires a degree of centralized decision making that is very uncommon in ethnicities.

Central America has seen many ethnic revolts. Colonial and nineteenth-century history is replete with local and limited regional revolts of Indian communities. The object of these efforts, however, was rarely to displace the center of the imperial or colonial state; much more commonly, they were expressions against the conduct of particular agents of the state—*alcaldes mayores*, priests, and so on.

In the Liberal republican era, however, as the state backed the expansion of coffee production and nationalized intervention into the customary practices of the indigenous population, rebellions were more specifically directed against the state. The successful Kuna rebellion in 1925 and the tragically unsuccessful Salvadoran effort in 1932 have already been recounted. In the Guatemalan case, the era since the Depression is too complex to be detailed here, but it has been one of continuing repression,[31] including the particularly deplorable slaughter of Indians that began in the late 1970s and lasted into the mid-1980s.[32]

In contrast to both the Kuna and the Salvador/Guatemala cases is the case of the military confrontation between the Sandinista government and the Miskito. This, too, is too complex to explore here, but the emerging result is that after a serious miscalculation and misunderstanding about the nature of indigenous ethnicities, the

of discussion is that they provide visibility to the ethnicity at both the national and the international levels and serve the members as devices for seeking support for their efforts.

Adaptive accretion. Strategies are usually conceived of as calculated plans that are laid out in hopes of achieving a specific outcome. In fact, while individuals activate some strategies consciously, the interaction of the social structure and environment often leads to macropatterns of which individuals may be quite unaware. For example, while the Garifuna were clearly aware of their role as a militant coastal buffer between the Spanish and English in the nineteenth century, the Miskito were not initially aware of their being manipulated as CIA pawns.

Cultural change and adaptation, unquestionably central to the survival of an ethnicity, is also a strategy of survival, but one that is practiced unintentionally. The incorporation of Africans into the societies of the island Caribs (producing the Black Caribs) and of the coastal Miskito (producing what was known colonially as the "Zambo-Miskito") surely did not begin as an overt attempt to bring foreign elements into the society. On a much more universal scale, the intermixture of Indians, blacks, and whites over parts of Central America for four centuries did not follow a planned strategy of survival for any particular ethnicity. Indeed, the creation of "mestizos," "zambos," and "mulattoes" probably, more than anything else, created a series of individuals who, on the one hand, were deculturated with respect to their parental societies, but who had access to more cultural variety than did either parent.

The problem of acculturation, with respect to the contemporary Indian ethnicities, has itself been a subject of some political contention. The problem is well illustrated by my own research history. When I began work in the early 1950s in Guatemala, I formulated a model[34] (essentially derived from Redfield's folk-urban continuum[35]) that was based on the idea that mestizo cultures had been expanding over the centuries, whereas Indian cultures had been increasingly acculturated, taking on non-Indian traits and giving up those of indigenous origin. While there was much that was true in this model, nevertheless, it did fail to recognize the degree to which Indians were retaining identity and reproducing their culture and the fact that the size of the Indian population was increasing. I came under severe, and to some degree merited, criticism for this model.[36] The critique was presented in a politicized form, arguing that my model (and, by association, the work of all American anthropologists)

was a strategy of the United States to deculturate the Indians so that they could be better controlled and exploited by the Guatemalan bourgeoisie.

The issue is, one hopes, not so simple. The Indian population is successfully expanding and reproducing itself and its culture, as the census figures cited earlier indicate. It is also the case that individual Indians are adopting the ladino lifestyle, or encouraging their children to do so, or are simply finding that the children are doing it in spite of efforts to stay the process.[37] Communities differ in the degree to which they have retained formal traits associated with the indigenous past; they differ in the degree to which they have succumbed to ladinoization; and they differ in the degree to which they apparently are willing to give up Indian identity. In fact, the issue that was presented as a polemic would better serve as an agenda for research.

NOTES

1. Guatemala might be, in these terms, a "ladinocratic" state. Whether creating terms like this is fruitful is questionable, since ethnic terminology is, itself, usually biased in favor of one or another ethnicity.

2. The term *indigenista* in Latin America has been used for over a century to refer to policies that have been established by mestizo-controlled governments and private interests for dealing with Indians. They have been specific policies that were argued to be for the benefit of the Indian. This is the usage of the Instituto Indigenista Interamericano and the various corresponding national Institutos Indigenistas. Today, in Guatemala, however, the term is also used to label a particular sector of pro-native American activists who favor complete autonomy of the indigenous population, breaking all state ties with ladinos.

3. Alexander Moore, "Lore and Life: Cuna Indian Pageants, Exorcism, and Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century, *Ethnohistory* 30, no. 2 (1983): 93–106; and James Howe, "Native Rebellion and US Intervention in Central America," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1985): pp. 59–65.

4. Philippe Bourgeois, "Conjugated Oppression: Class and Ethnicity a`mong Guaymi and Kuna Banana Workers," *American Ethnologist*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 328-348, 1988.

5. The previous three paragraphs and the three tables are taken from the national censuses.

6. Cited in Alejandro Dagoberto Marroquin, "El problema indigena en El Salvador," *America Indigena*, (Oct.-Dec.), 1975. p. 755.

7. Richard N. Adams, *Cultural Surveys of Panama-Nicaragua-Guatemala-Nicaragua-Honduras-El Salvador*. Scientific Publication 33, Pan American Sanitary Bureau. Washington, 1957.

8. Judith M. Maxwell, "Nahual-Pipil: "Muy Político," pp. 17–18, both in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1982.

9. Ministerio de Cultura y Comunicaciones, "El indigenismo de El Salvador," prepared for Organización de los Estados Americanos–Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, Noveno Congreso Indigenista Intermamericano, 28 Oct. al 1 de Nov., 1985, Santa Fé, Nuevo México, EEUU. (OAS/Ser. K / XXV.1.9 / CII/NR-6/86. Original: Spanish) Octobre de 1985, p. 2.

10. Esquino (1987), p.14.

11. Christopher Lutz and George Lovell, "Core and Periphery in Colonial Guatemala," prepared for a symposium on Indian Communities and the State in Guatemala, Latin American Studies Association, New Orleans, March 17, 1988.

12. E.g., see John Lloyd Stephens', *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, & Yucatan*, New York: 1969 (1841), Arturo Morellet, "Viaje a la American Central y El Yucatan," (in Nemesio Fernández Cuesta, *Nuevo viajero universal* , Tomo III. *América*. Madrid: Gaspar y Roig, 1861, pp. 602–611), or G. G. von Tempsky's, *Mitla, a Narrative of Incidents and Personal Adventures on a Journal in Mexico, Guatemala...*, (edited by J. S. Bell, London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1858).

13. David C. Brooks, "Marines, Miskitos and the Hunt for Sandino: Anthropology at War along the Rio Coco in 1928," *Journal of Latin American Studies* (Cambridge University Press, in press).

14. Richard N. Adams, "Cultural Components of Central America," *American Anthropologist*, 58:5:881–907, 1956.

15. Thomas P. Anderson, *Matanza: El Salvador'a Communist Revolt of 1932* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971); Shelton H. Davis, "Agrarian Structure and Ethnic Resistance: The Indian in Guatemalan and Salvadoran National Politics," in *Ethnicities and Nations*, ed. Remo

Guidieri, Francesco Pellizzi, Stanley J. Tambiah (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), pp.78–106.

16. In conversation.

17. This was introduced by David Maybury-Lewis, "Becoming Indian in Lowland South America," on press.

18. See Richard N. Adams , "Ethnic Images and Strategies in 1944," prepared for a symposium on Indian Communities and the State in Guatemala, Latin American Studies Association, New Orleans, March 17, 1988.

19. Richard N. Adams, *Cultural Surveys of Guatemala——El Salvador——Honduras——Nicaragua——Panama*. Scientific Publication No. 33. Washington, D.C.: Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

20. See R. Adams, "Ethnic Images," 1988.

21. L. Fernando Cruz Sandoval, "Los indios de Honduras y la situación de sus recursos naturales," *America Indígena 44*, no. 3 (1984): 423–446.

22. The Indians of Costa Rica form a tiny part of the national population and are scattered in what were earlier refugee areas, mainly in the east (Bozzoli de Willie, 1986). The government has for some decades provided protective *comarcas*. In spite of considerable beneficent legislation, these small populations are confronting serious incursions by the expanding mestizo population. Too often the legislated lands are of poor quality and, in the event, suffer from indistinct boundaries. Hall (1985, p. 45) says that 10 percent of the Talamancan reserves are cultivatable. In 1977 the Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas (CONAI) was set up to provide technical help and legal protection to the Indian groups. According to one study, however, a focus has been to convert the Native Americans into more standard peasants, and to ignore the problem of helping to find ways to retain their lifestyle (Murillo, 1983, p.53).

23. Philip D. Young, *Ngawbe: Tradition and Change among the Western Guaymi of Panama*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971; Reina Torres y Arauz, *Panamá Indígena*. (Panama City: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, Patrimonio Historico, 1980); Comitê Patrocinador del "Foro sobre el Pueblo Guaymí y su Futuro" y Centro de Estudios y Acción Social-Panamá, CEASPA, *El Pueblo Guaymi y su futuro* (Panamá, 1982).

24. The social anthropological perspective, taken here, seeks to identify consistency between events external to the individual and social collectivity, and those internal, psychological processes, the evidence for which lies solely in the behavior available for external observation. Our interests necessarily lie heavily with these external events, since one cannot directly observe the internal correspondences.

25. Notes from a verbal presentation at the meetings of the Latin American Studies Association, New Orleans, March 1988.

26. Stephen Gudeman, *Economics as Culture: Models and Metaphors of Livelihood*. London: Routledge & Kegan, 1986.

27. Eric Wolf, "Types of Latin American Peasantry: A Preliminary Discussion." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 57, pp. 452–471.

28. In this sense, the family and household reproduces other families, but the community reproduces its membership and thereby retains a separate community structure.

29. Jane Hill (in Gudeman, *Economics*, 1986) cites the sacred places for the communities of Nahuatl speakers.

30. Carol Smith, "Causes and Consequences of Central-Place Types in Western Guatemala" in *Regional Analysis, Vol. 1, Economic Systems*, ed. Carol Smith (New York: Academic Press, 1976), pp. 255–302.

31. See Jim Handy, "A Sea of Indians," *The Americas*, in press. Also see Richard N. Adams, "Ethnic Images," 1988.

32. The literature is extensive, but for starters, see Ricardo Falla, *Voices of the Survivors. The Massacre at Finca San Francisco, Guatemala* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cultural Survival, and Anthropology Resource Center, 1983); Robert Carmack, ed., *The Harvest of Violence; The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).

33. See Martin Diskin et al., *Peace and Autonomy on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua: A Report of the LASA Task Force on Human Rights and Academic Freedom* (Austin: Latin American Studies Association, 1986).

34. Richard N. Adams, "Cultural Components, 1956"; and *Encuesta sobre la cultura de los ladinos en Guatemala* (Guatemala: Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca, 1956).

35. E.g., Robert Redfield, *Folk Cultures of Yucatan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

36. Carlos Guzmán Bockler and Jean-Loup Herbert, *Guatemala: una interpretación histórico-social* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1970); Humberto Flores Alvarado, *El adamscismo y la sociedad guatemalteca* (Guatemala: Editorial Escolar "Piedra Santa," 1973).

37. John Early, *The Demographic Structure and Evolution of a Peasant System: The Guatemalan Population* (Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University, 1982).